She was still going to kill me. She retreated into the hallway, removing another cigarette from the breast pocket of the greasy black leather Jacket as I repeated, "No smoking." She'd get evicted if she didn't stop smoking.

The manager ordered me to write a report. Joan was getting evicted.

*

Betty brought Caspar her watch to repair. Caspar had no training in that line, but politely examined it anyway. A noisome stench emanated from the dial. The hands of time stank of mortality. Then he realized it was shit, caked on from Betty's own hands where she'd been scratching herself. He dropped it, disgusted. It bounced and whirled across the office floor like an insect in its death throes, flashed like a fish's scale in sunlight, winked like Fred Astaire tap-dancing in a storm-sewer.

Betty never wiped her fat ass with anything besides her hand. I'd already noticed the large brown stains on her linen. Shit.

She retrieved her watch and pressed it to her ear, grinning broadly. It ticked.

*